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REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 4-16, 18-21, 32-38, 40-44, 46-53, 55-57, and 59 were presented for examination and remain pending upon entry of the instant response and request for reconsideration. Claims 1, 12, 13, 32, and 46 are independent.

Independent claims 1 and 32, as well as claims 2, 4-11, 35-36, 38, and 40-43 that depend therefrom, respectively, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over U.S. Patent No. 6,411,865 to Qin et al. (Qin) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,167,329 to Engel et al. (Engel). Independent claims 12, 13, and 46, as well as claims 14-16, 18-21, 44, 46-53, 55-57, and 59 that depend therefrom, respectively, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over Qin and Engel in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,875,088 to Matsko et al. (Matsko).

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Independent claims 1, 12, and 13 each recite, in part, the step of "controlling said microprocessor to perform instantaneous overcurrent protection of the switching devices based at least in part on said electrical parameters (emphasis added)". Thus, the claimed step controls the microprocessor to perform instantaneous overcurrent protection of more than one switching device (switching devices).

The Office Action acknowledges that Qin fails to disclose or suggest a microprocessor that performs instantaneous overcurrent protection. As such, Qin does not disclose or suggest that the central unit 20 performs both the "zone protective function" and the "instantaneous overcurrent protection" as recited in claims 1, 12, and 13.

Rather, the Office Action asserts that Engel discloses a microprocessor that performs instantaneous overcurrent protection.

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However, Applicants respectfully submit that the microprocessor of Engel only performs the instantaneous overcurrent protection for a single switching device.

Specifically, Engel discloses an electronic trip unit 10 that includes two different microprocessors 24 and 46. The microprocessor 46 utilizes the data generated by the digital samples to provide voltage based protection functions for example, under/over voltage protection for the electrical system 12, and also uses the samples for waveform capture and harmonic analysis for metering and display purposes. The second microprocessor 24 implements the overcurrent protection functions to generate a trip signal when any one of the current/time characteristics of a delayed trip protection function is exceeded. This trip signal is passed to a trip mechanism 32 which opens separable contacts 34A, B and C in the three phase conductors 14A, B and C of the electrical system 12.

Clearly, Engel merely discloses that microprocessor 24 passes the trip signal to a single device, namely trip mechanism 32.

Moreover, Engel clearly teaches away from combining both the "zone protective function" and the "instantaneous overcurrent protection" into the same microprocessor by disclosing the need for two separate microprocessors.

Matsko is not asserted by the Office Action, nor does Matsko disclose or suggest, the claimed microprocessor that performs both the "zone protective function" and the "instantaneous overcurrent protection".

Claims 1, 12, and 13 are therefore in condition for allowance. Claims 2, 4-11, 14-16, and 18-21 are also in condition for allowance for at least the reason that they depend from the aforementioned claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to claims 1-2, 4-16, and 18-21 are respectfully requested.

Independent claims 32 and 46 each recite that the control processing unit

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"performs all primary power distribution functions for the circuit power distribution system and performs a zone protective function (emphasis added)". Support for this amendment can be found at least at paragraph [0026] of the specification.

Again, Applicants respectfully submit that, and the Office Action acknowledges that, Qin does not disclose or suggest that the central unit 20 performs both the "zone protective function" and "all primary power distribution functions" as recited in claims 32 and 46.

As discussed in detail above with respect to claims 1, 12, and 13, Engel merely discloses that microprocessor 24 passes the trip signal to a single device, namely trip mechanism 32. Moreover, Engel clearly teaches away from combining both the "zone protective function" and the "instantaneous overcurrent protection" into the same microprocessor by disclosing the need for two separate microprocessors.

Additionally, Matsko is not asserted by the Office Action, nor does Matsko disclose or suggest the claimed microprocessor that performs both the "zone protective function" and "all primary power distribution functions".

Claims 32 and 46 are therefore in condition for allowance. Claims 33-38, 40-44, 47-53, 55-57, and 59 are also in condition for allowance for at least the reason that they depend from the aforementioned claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to claims 32-38, 40-44, 46-53, 55-57, and 59 are respectfully requested.

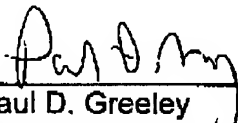
In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Such action is solicited.

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If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with Applicants' attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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